

## Discussion continues on workforce housing

### ■ Proposal would expand program to the Corridor Cities Transitway

No decision yet from the County Council on a workforce housing plan sponsored by Councilman Steven A. Silverman (D-At large) of Silver Spring. The plan would require 10 percent more affordable housing units

#### Council Notes JANEL DAVIS

in most new developments around the county's Metro stations. The units, designed for two-income families, would be in addition to already required moderately priced dwelling units. Park and Planning officials estimated the program would create about 2,500 units countywide.

Under the plan, developers would not receive any additional market rate units to offset the costs, but would receive a workforce unit bonus. With the additional bonus, the developments could exceed the unit limits established under existing master plans, a possibility that Park and Planning officials are against.

During a second full-council worksession Tuesday, council members continued questioning county housing officials and consultants about the plan's viability, cost to developers and effect on the existing MPDU program.

Council members like Michael L. Subin questioned the plans unintended consequences, such as drastically increasing the price of market rate units and forcing developers to abandon possible development projects.

"I'm concerned that at the end of the day we're passing a policy that sounds great ... but drives another group out of the county," said Subin (D-At large) of Gaithersburg.

For developers, there are still many unanswered questions.

"I'm all for affordable housing and I think Steve [Silverman] is trying his best to deal with it, but a plan like that gets tough in Metro areas because of the high construction costs in those type of units," said Steven Lebling, owner of Lebling Development LLC, who did not attend Tuesday's worksession. "It could work, but there are a lot of complicated issues to consider."

To increase the number of workforce units, Councilman Michael J. Knapp (D-Dist. 2) of Germantown proposed expanding the program to the area around the proposed Corri-

dor Cities Transitway, the light-rail or bus rapid transit line that would run from Shady Grove through Gaithersburg to Clarksburg.

A third worksession and a vote are scheduled for July 11.

#### In other council action

**•Working from home:** The council also approved 7-0 guidelines for a resolution granting tax credits to employers who buy new computers for their telecommuting employees. The bill sets the credit limit for this year at \$100,000, enough for 50 employers to take advantage of the program. To qualify, employees must work from home 30 percent of the year, or 78 days for full-time employees.

The legislation follows four years of lobbying by Councilman Howard A. Denis (R-Dist. 1) of Chevy Chase, who led the push for telecommuting incentives.

**•Off and running:** On Saturday, Knapp, a first-term councilman, announced his re-election bid for the District 2 seat at the Maryland SoccerPlex in Germantown. He faces competition from fellow Democrat and health care consultant Sharon Dooley and Republican Scott Dyer.

Bethesda civic activist Bette Petrides (D) has announced her bid for an at-large seat on the County Council. She joins a packed group of 15 candidates running for four seats.

**•Call for collaboration:** A group of women campaigning for seats on the County Council and school board is calling for cooperation on issues affecting children and families. Councilwoman Marilyn J. Praisner (D-Dist. 4) of Calverton and Valerie Ervin, running in District 4, and Duchy Trachtenberg, running at large, joined school board candidates Judy Docca and incumbent Nancy Navarro at the Children's Resource Center in Rockville on Monday to announce their common interests.

If elected, the women plan to work together on legislative priorities for Annapolis. Although all five are running for election, the group does not constitute a slate, they said.

#### Gone fishin'

There will be no council meeting next week in observance of the July 4th holiday. Regular legislative sessions resume July 11 with a worksession on proposed charter amendments and recommendations of the Charter Review Commission and a public hearing on modified rules for taxicab drivers.